



## Healthy Forests Report

April 11, 2005

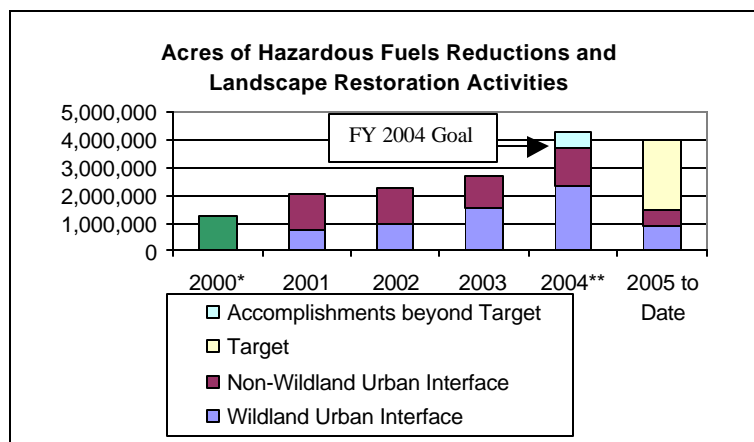
The Department of the Interior (DOI) and the USDA Forest Service are committed to the implementation of the National Fire Plan (NFP) and Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI). The NFP and HFI care for our forests and rangelands, reduce the risk of catastrophic fire to communities, help save the lives of firefighters and citizens, and protect critical natural resources.

### **HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION & LANDSCAPE RESTORATION ACTIVITIES**

Hazardous levels of fuels in our forests and grasslands are the most significant risk factor of catastrophic wildland fires. Land managers are addressing this risk by reducing fuel build-ups with two approaches:

1. Hazardous Fuels Reductions are designed to reduce fuels around homes, communities and resources to slow or stop wildland fires from threatening these high-value areas.
2. Landscape Restoration Activities are designed with multiple benefits in mind. The primary objective is to restore the landscape to improve a compromised resource such as wildlife habitat, watershed health, etc. A reduction in hazardous fuel levels is a secondary benefit of the restoration activities.

Under the direction of the NFP, and using the tools and authorities created by HFI and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA), the Federal land management agencies have reduced the threat of catastrophic wildland fire on over 13 million acres of federal lands since 2000.



\* FY 2000 is used as a baseline for reporting, as the NFP was implemented in FY 2001. Treatment location was not included in reporting prior to FY 2001.

\*\* Acres treated under landscape restoration activities were not reported prior to FY 2004.

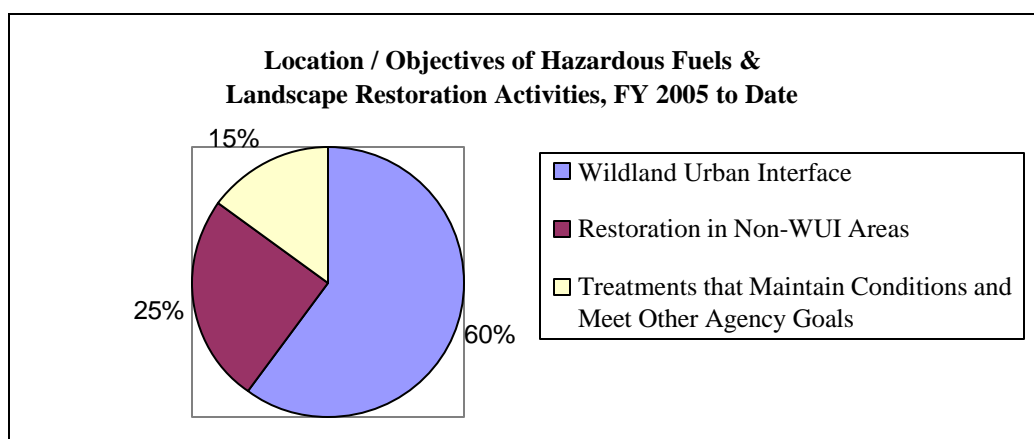
### **Hazardous Fuels & Landscape Restoration Activities, by Appropriation, FY 2005 to Date**

Treatment Type	Hazardous Fuels Appropriations		Other Appropriations (Landscape Restoration Activities)		TOTAL
	Prescribed Fire	Mechanical & Other	Prescribed Fire	Mechanical & Other	
Forest Service	755,465	63,875	19,029	39,834	878,203
DOI	362,021	145,315	30,231	91,549	629,116
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,117,486</b>	<b>209,190</b>	<b>49,260</b>	<b>131,383</b>	<b>1,507,319</b>

### Hazardous Fuels and Landscape Restoration Priorities

The Forest Service and the Department of the Interior land management agencies hazardous fuels reduction and landscape restoration activities are designed to meet one of three objectives:

1. Directly reduce wildfire threats to homes and communities that are adjacent to or within wildlands, in what is known as the wildland urban interface.
2. Prioritize treatments in those forests and grasslands outside of the wildland-urban interface that are at greatest risk of catastrophic wildland fire. Treatments in these areas move towards restoring fire to its historical role (in terms of frequency and severity).
3. The third objective includes two main components: maintenance of previous treatments to ensure resiliency to catastrophic wildland fire and implementation of activities that are in line with the agencies' other long-term management goals, such as wildlife management, watershed protection or timber stand improvement.



### HEALTHY FORESTS AUTHORITIES

Implementation of activities under the HFI and HFRA authorities can be summarized as a three-step process:

1. Planning for NEPA Decisions – Activities that will require NEPA Decisions are identified; this generally occurs up to 3 years prior to actual project implementation. The planning is typically broad in scope, and may include multiple treatments; identification of specific project location and size usually has not yet taken place.
2. Analysis and Preparation – Project preparation and design generally occur in the year prior to implementation. Project scope, location and treatment type are refined to a finer level of detail (information on the analysis and preparation of projects is currently not available in the agencies' national reporting databases).
3. Treatment Planning and Accomplishment – Final planning and implementation occur.

#### Activities under HFI and HFRA Authorities in FY 2005

	# of NEPA Decisions Planned	# of Treatments Planned for FY 2005	Acres Planned for Treatment in FY 2005	Acres Accomplished to date in FY 2005
<b>HFRA</b>	93	116	32,029	4,801
<b>HFI</b>	415	1,629	368,635	61,882
<b>Total</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>1,745</b>	<b>400,664</b>	<b>66,683</b>

### UTILIZATION OF FOREST BYPRODUCTS

Byproducts removed during hazardous fuels reduction and landscape restoration activities can sometimes be utilized in certain forest products (e.g., timber, engineered lumber, paper and pulp, furniture) and bio-energy and bio-based products (e.g., plastics, ethanol, and diesel).

	# Acres Mechanically Treated with Byproducts Utilized	Total # of Acres Treated by Mechanical Means	% Acres Mechanically Treated with Byproducts Utilized
<b>Hazardous Fuels</b>			
DOI	10,871	119,748	9%
Forest Service	12,115	63,875	19%
<b>Landscape Restoration</b>			
Forest Service	27,639	58,863	47%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50,625</b>	<b>242,486</b>	<b>21%</b>

### STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS AWARDED

Stewardship contracting includes natural resource management practices that promote a closer working relationship with local communities in a broad range of activities that improve land conditions. These projects shift the focus of federal forest and rangeland management towards a desired future resource condition. They are also a means for federal agencies to contribute to the development of sustainable rural communities, restore and maintain healthy forest ecosystems, and provide a continuing source of local income and employment.

	Bureau of Land Management		Forest Service	
2003	2 contracts	300 acres	50 contracts	14,000 acres
2004	22 contracts	15,000 acres	64 contracts	42,000 acres
2005	0 contracts awarded 70 contracts expected		9 contracts awarded 43 contracts expected	3,000 acres
Total	146 contracts for 74,000 acres*			

\*Not all projects in table above were authorized under HFRA.

### HFRA TITLE IV: APPLIED RESEARCH

Using authority provided under Title IV of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, the Forest Service is partnering with universities and state forestry agencies to conduct landscape-scale applied research projects to address insect infestations and diseases, which threaten the health of many of our forests and grasslands in the US. The applied research projects aim to reduce problems associated with current insect outbreaks and to translate that information for practicing professionals, landowners, and the public. Current Forest Service **landscape-scale silvicultural assessments** include studies of gypsy moth effects and oak decline on the Daniel Boone National Forest and southern pine beetle hazards on forests in the west Gulf region.

Title IV also includes direction for **accelerated information gathering** projects on forest insects and diseases, which are attributed to economic losses estimated at \$92 billion in the period 1906-1991 (Office of Technology Assessment, U. S. Congress 1993). Most notably, a recent study of the association of wildfire severity with tree health and the numbers of pine bark beetles and reproduction weevils was recently completed in Florida.

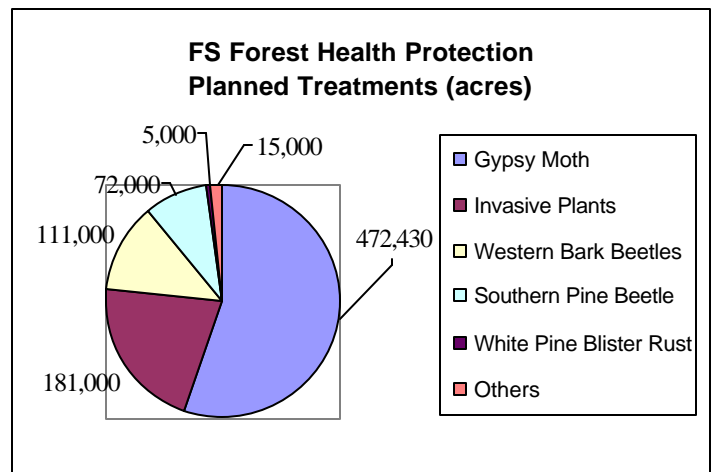
For more information of the Forest Service's Applied Research projects under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, please visit: [www.healthyforests.gov/applied\\_research/](http://www.healthyforests.gov/applied_research/).

## INVASIVE SPECIES AND FOREST HEALTH

The *National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Invasive Species Management* ([http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/publications/Invasive\\_Species.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/publications/Invasive_Species.pdf)) was released in late fall 2004. This publication identifies strategic direction for all Forest Service Programs relative to invasive species. In FY 2005, Forest Service Forest Health Protection activities include prevention and suppression efforts and provide resources to restore lands impacted by native and nonnative forest pests.

The southern pine beetle, a native insect pest, threatens forests in the Southern United States. The Forest Service, Forest Health Protection program provides \$14 million to conduct prevention, suppression and restoration activities on 72,000 acres of federal, state and private lands for southern pine beetle.

In the Western United States, a complex of various native western bark beetles has caused outbreaks in many States. Forest Service, Forest Health Protection, provides \$14.8 million to conduct activities targeting western bark beetles to treat 111,000 acres of federal, state and private lands. Other program funds will be allocated to survey, control or manage various invasive pests; some include: hemlock woolly adelgid, white pine blister rust, gypsy moth, sudden oak death, emerald ash borer, Asian long horned beetle, Mediterranean pine engraver beetle and invasive plants. Around 856,000 acres will be treated as a result of these efforts.



## HEALTHY FORESTS AND COMMUNITIES

State, Federal and local partners continue to encourage communities in development and implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). Anecdotal reporting from the field indicates a building momentum in accomplishing these plans.

An interagency group is preparing a briefing paper directed at State Foresters, Forest Service Regional Foresters and BLM State Directors, County and City Government Officials and Local Fire Chiefs emphasizing the need to address the challenges of the wildland urban interface through the use of CWPPs. The briefing paper will suggest specific actions to elevate and accelerate plan development. The Western Governors' Association and the American Forest Resource Council are currently planning collaborative workshops and training sessions aimed at development and preparation of CWPPs. Currently, States awarding State Fire Assistance Grants for fuel hazard mitigation are requiring a supporting CWPP as a criterion for selection for funding.

More information on how the Healthy Forests Initiative is helping communities, including a link to the "Community Wildfire Protection Plans: How-To Guide" can be found at: [www.healthyforests.gov/community](http://www.healthyforests.gov/community).